

Chestnut Oak Forest

One of the more common community types of the Blue Ridge, this community type is very rare in the Piedmont. Stokes County contains most of the few examples of this community type in the North Carolina Piedmont. Typically, the chestnut oak-dominated forests of the Piedmont are classified as Piedmont Monadnock Forest because they mostly support piedmontane species. Chestnut Oak Forests support a collection of species that are primarily distributed in the Appalachian Mountains. The Stokes County occurrences represent the low elevation edge of this community type in North Carolina. These forests occur on ridgetops and upper slopes on dry, rocky, acidic soils. In addition to chestnut oak, the Piedmont examples may have scarlet oak, white oak, post oak, pignut hickory, and pines in the canopy. The subcanopy may contain black gum, red maple, sourwood, sassafras, American chestnut, and blackjack oak. The shrub layer is patchy and often supports mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), blueberries (*Vaccinium* spp.), bear huckleberry (*Gaylussacia ursina*), black huckleberry (*Gaylussacia baccata*), and wild azalea (*Rhododendron periclymenoides*). The very sparse herb layer supports pipsissewa (*Chimaphila maculata*), eastern bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), northern oat grass (*Danthonia spicata*), greater coreopsis (*Coreopsis major*), fly-poison (*Amianthus muscaetoxicum*), and little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*). The rare bear oak (*Quercus ilicifolia*) occurs in this community type at Hanging Rock State Park. The rare large witch-alder (*Fothergilla major*) and sweet pinesap (*Monotropsis odorata*) occur in this community at Sauratown Mountain. The presence of American chestnut, pitch pine, Table Mountain pine, and flame azalea and the absence of southern red oak and post oak differentiate this community from the similar Piedmont Monadnock Forest.

Piedmont Monadnock Forest

This common community type is similar to Chestnut Oak Forest. The presence of typically Piedmont canopy species, such as southern red oak and post oak and the absence of montane species such as American chestnut, pitch pine, yellow birch, and Catawba rhododendron (*Rhododendron catawbiense*) differentiate it from Chestnut Oak Forest. Its canopy is strongly dominated by chestnut oak, often with the presence of typical Piedmont oaks, hickories, and pines. Its understory often contains sourwood, black gum, red maple, and other species. The typically patchy shrub layer often contains mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), blueberries (*Vaccinium* spp.), black huckleberry (*Gaylussacia baccata*), and other heaths. The typically sparse herb layer contains pipsissewa (*Chimaphila maculata*), goats-rue (*Tephrosia virginiana*), eastern bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), greater coreopsis (*Coreopsis major*), trailing arbutus (*Epigaea repens*), oak-leach (*Aureolaria* spp.), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), and tick-trefoils (*Desmodium* spp.).

Dry Oak--Hickory Forest

This community type is one of the most common in the Piedmont, but high quality examples are increasingly scarce. It differs from Dry-Mesic Oak--Hickory Forest in having a